

January 25th, 2024

Let me start by saying that I am NOT making excuses, there are no adequate excuses. I am thoroughly ashamed of my part in this debacle, and I will likely never forgive myself. But the fans that have supported the Hugos, the nominees, and those that were unfairly and erroneously deemed ineligible in particular, deserve an explanation. Perhaps the only way I can even begin to ease my conscience is to provide one.

I was asked to join the Hugo committee for Chengdu, and I agreed to do so because I care about the Hugos. I've been a member of several Hugo committees going back to 2009 and I was the Hugo Administrator in 2012. The Hugos have always been important to me, and I believed, in part because of the depth of Dave McCarty's experience, and because I thought he felt the same way, that they would be run with integrity.

It happened gradually. We vetted entries, as always, checking length, publication dates, etc. Then things began being removed from the vetting lists. We were told there was collusion in a Chinese publication that had published a nominations list, a slate as it were, and so those ballots were identified and eliminated, exactly as many have speculated*. This certainly accounted for some of the disappearances. These were all Chinese language publications so I don't know who the authors might have been. I was never privy to the actual nomination numbers.

Should I have resigned? Probably, but hindsight, as they say, is 20:20. It was apparent that there were issues beyond the slate. We were told to vet nominees for work focusing on China, Taiwan, Tibet, or other topics that may be an issue in China and, to my shame, I did so. Understand that I signed up fully aware that there were going to be issues. I am not that naïve regarding the Chinese political system, but I wanted the Hugos to happen, and not have them completely crash and burn. I just didn't imagine that there would be so many issues, and that they'd be ultimately handled so poorly by Dave. (Okay, so maybe I do have a certain level of naivete.) Dave insisted that there needed to be more time elapsed before the Chinese nationals would be safe from the ensuing uproar, and he made it clear from the time the finalist names were released that he intended to wait the entire 90 days. Are they safe now? I hope so, I truly do, but I can't imagine that ensuing uproar and the international media attention that came along with it has done them any favors.

As far as Dave's apparent actions in cooking the results, I have to say I didn't really expect that either. And if I had I, like many others have said, would have imagined he'd do a better job. (Again, my non-zero level of naivete at play.) Had that been the case I might not be writing this, but he didn't do a better job. The fallout has negatively affected something I care deeply about, the Hugos, and I'm not sure they can recover.

Again, I am not making excuses. I sincerely apologize to my community. I don't expect you to forgive me when I can't even forgive myself. I've violated your trust, and I don't deserve your forgiveness, but I am so very sorry. Mea Culpa.

Diane Lacey

*Although since then, a better explanation has been given for the "cliff" phenomenon in the data.